

16.
A Voice from the Dead :
OR THE
S P E E C H
OF AN
Old Noble Peer:
Being the Excellent
O R A T I O N
OF THE
Learned and Famous
B O E T I U S ,
To the Emperour
THEODORICUS.

London Printed, and sold by Richard Janeway, 1681.

7. Voice from the Dead

OF THE

2. P. E. H.

OF THE

OLD MAN

THE OLD MAN

OF THE

OF THE

Learned and

OF THE

THE

THEODOCIS

THEODOCIS

A Voice from the Dead :

O R,

*The Excellent Speech of that Noble and
Learned Roman Boetius, to the
Emperour Theodoricus.*

S I R,

I Am not Ignorant, that we are in a time, wherein it is, as it were, much easier to *Fly*, than to *Speak* of the state of this Empire without offence to any; and that *all discourse*, which at this present may be framed, will ever be *suspected* by those, who have made even our *Thoughts* Criminal to your Majesty.

Yet must I needs say, it is a matter very hard to be *Silent* in so great Revolutions of Affairs, since Nature hath not Created us like *Crocodiles*, who are said to have *Eyes* to Weep, and not a *Tongue* to Complain. I perceive we lose as it were all that which we have of *Roman* in us, and that in this *Universal Disaster*, where all the World should strengthen their Arms against Violence: Men are contented to do, as in Thunder, every one prays the *Thunder-Bolt* may not fall upon *his own house*, and very little Regards the danger of his *Neighbour*: so likewise we see *many Senators*, whose Dignity ought to put into their Mouths, good and *forseible Words* for the defence of Justice, satisfying themselves to avoid the *Blow*, and expecting safety in *Common Ruins*.

As for my self, I freely protest, that being Born of *Blood*, which never learn'd to *Flatter* any man, and seeing my self in a Rank where my Silence may prove Injurious to the *Pub-*

A 2

lick,

lick, since I cannot uphold *Liberty* already too much leaning to it's Ruine, I will at least support the *Image* of it, and in so general a servitude, speak something, wherein I will either discharge my *Conscience* for the present, or comfort my *Asbes* for the time to come,

Alas Sir, when I behold you sitting upon the Throne of Glory, whereunto the Hand of God seemeth to have raised you by a *Miracle*, fortified you by *Discretion*, and blessed you with so many *Prosperities*; I cannot chuse but remember with the most tender Resentments of my Heart, the *Calms* of the *first years*, when you took into your Hand the Stern of this *large Empire*; who ever saw *divers Metalls* so happily com-mixed, as we then beheld *different Nations* united in one *intire Body* under your Authority? what consent in Affections? what correspondence in all orders? what vigour in Laws? what *Obedience* in Subjects? what *Agreement in the Senate*? what Applause among the *People*? what Policy in Cities? what good Fortune in Arms? what Blessing in all the success of your Affairs?

Seemed it not, that God had affixed to your Standards and Edicts some secret vertue, which made the one Triumph in War, and the other become prosperous in *Peace*, with so much Terrour and Reputation, that even things *opposite* of their own Nature, knit themselves firmly together for your Benefit?

O Sir, what is become of that *Golden face* of your Govern-ment? who hath Metamorphosed it into this *Leaden Visage*? perhaps you thought it was a part of the Greatness of your Majesty, to hold a *Senate under*, to whom all the good *Empe-rouers* have so much ascribed, that they esteemed them as necessary for their *Greatness*, as leaves about the *Rose* to set out its Beauty.

I could

I could tell you Sir! how much these *Counsels* are pernicious, were it not that the Experience of the years of your Reign hath taught you more, than all the Malignity of Men can deface. If you will be pleased to call as yet to Counsel your *Wit* and *Understanding*, which God hath Replenished with so many fair and noble Lights: Believe me, you shall find this people is as the *Herb Basil*, which rendreth a good *Savour*, as it is said, when gently *handled*, and createth *Scorpions* when *rudely Chafed*. Hold us in the Estimation and Condition, wherein you hitherto have Retained us, and you shall see nothing more *Traſſable* than the Roman people; but if you proceed with these Violences, by which some daily pervert your good *Nature*, it is to be feared, lest this severity produce not rather *Poison*, even for those who hope out of it to derive *sweetness*.

Our *Enemies* cease not to Exasperate you, upon want of *Respect* due to your Majesty, and yet God knows we have so regarded Royal Authority, that seeing it in most unjust hands, where it lost its *Lustre*, we suffered it not to lose the fruit of our *Obedience*.

Allow Sir, the Liberty, which ever hath been the most *precious Inheritance* of this Empire; you have placed men over our Heads, who, to become Great, and unwilling to seem any thing less than what they are, seek to smother in our *Miseries* the *baseness* of their own *Birth*, and Believe the means to *justify their own Carriage*, is to take away *Eyes* from those who have them, and to render Tongues *Mute*, lest they may learn a Truth. Now adays to be Born *Rich*, is to become a Prey, and to arrive at Government with some supereminencies of *Wit*, is to raise *Enemies*; all great Actions are suspected: and it seemeth, that to find *safety*, we must seek it either in *Ignorance* or *Idleness*.

We

We have so learned to Obey, that we would not hitherto so much as enter into consideration of the distribution you made of your Favours, leaving them more Free, than are in the Sun, his *Rays*, and contenting us to Honour the Character of your Majesty, as well on *Rocks*, as Marbles and *Silver*. But now, when we see the *precious Interests of the Kingdom*, in Hands *less pure* than we wish, what else can we do in so *publick a Calamity*, but here most humbly *Remonstrate*, that which the *Subtil* dissemble, the *Miserable* suffer, the *Good* deplore, and even the very *Stones* Relate?

Where is the time, Sir, when we heard those Noble words to proceed from your Mouth, *That the Flock may be Sheared, not Flayed; That a Body overcharged sunk to the Ground; That there was no Tribute comparable to the precious Commodities derived from the Love of Subjects?* Now, all the *Cities and Countries* bewail the Rigorous Concussions they feel, to satisfy with their *Sweat and Blood*, the Avarice of some particulars, who are notwithstanding, as *greedy as Fire*, and more unsatiable than the *Abyss*.

I exasperate not here our Miseries, by an amplification of words; I have, Sir, made you to see, when you pleased to hear me in your *Cabinet*, the Tears of Provinces, which softened your heart to Compassion, and opened your Hands to Liberality, so that if your good Affections be not altered by some, you are capable enough to discharge Heaven of all Promises, which it hath made unto us, by the happiness of your Empire.

Unseal those Eyes which you so oft have opened for the comfort of your poor Subjects, and in what part soever you turn them, you shall behold nothing but *Miseries*. Is it not a strange thing, that Slaves being sometimes sold to courteous Masters, sweeten the sharpness of their condition by some Gentle

Gentle usage, and that there should be none, but the people of *Rome*, who yearly buy out their Bondage? None but the people of *Rome*, who were made accountable for the Goods pulled from them, and Tributary for the Shiprack of their Poverty?

From thence the way is taken to the oppression of Magistrates, and some are perswaded, That throughly to *Mow the Meadow*, you must *Humble the Heads* of Plants most Eminent. *Paulinus* is dispoiled, *Albinus* is Guilty of Treason; They are culpable enough, since they are Rich and Powerful. It is said, there can be no safety found but in their Disgrace. And who seeth not, that these proceedings tend to the Ruin of that most *Noble Body*, which almost Thirty years maintained your Royal Crown?

Out alas, Sir, if we Exclaim against *Witches*, who Poyson *Fountaines*, how can we be Silent, seeing endeavour is used to *Invenom the Soul of the Prince*, who is the Source of all Counsels, to the end we may hereafter find *Poison*, where we hope for *Remedies*?

Sir, only behold and imitate *your Self*, Re-assume that Spirit, which made you Reign in our *Hearts*, as well as in your *Provinces*: distinguish *Flatterers* from true *Friends*; hearken to those, whose *Loyalty* you have known in the Success of so many Prosperities.

Remember your Self, That you were made to Reign over *Men*, not as a Man, but as the *Law*; to bear your Subjects in your *Bosome*, and not Trample them *Under-foot*; to teach by Example, and not constrain by *Force*; to be a *Father of Citizens*, and not a *Master of Slaves*.

Remember your Self, Kings are given by Heaven, for the *Use of People*, and that they ought not to have so much Regard to the *Extent of their Power*, as not to consider the *Measure of their*.

their Obligations. Handle the matter so, that the *Greatness* of your Majesty may appear in it's *Goodness*, and that this word which you heretofore had in your Mouth, may stick Eternally in your Heart, when you said: *A Good Prince ought not to fear any thing so much, as to be too much feared.*

Boetius, who made this Oration, was Author of that Incomparable Philosophical Discourse, *De Consolatione*, being Consul of *Rome*, under the said *Theodoricus*, the first Emperour of the *Gothish* Race, about the year of our Lord 500. And this Speech was first Publisht long since in *Causins Holy Court*, fol. 290. in these very words, as any person may find that pleases to Examine it. But *Obsequium amicos veritas odium parit*, the Upholder of the Business was, That the Emperour was much offended at this his freedom, and being spur'd on by his three Mischievous Favourites, *Trigilla*, *Congiastrus*, and *Cyprianus*, first Banisht, and afterwards Murder'd the wise and faithful *Boetius*, who had served him many years with an Intire and Irreproachable Loyalty. And soon after *Theodoricus* himself Died distracted, and the Empire in a very few years, was snatcht from his Successor, by the Victorious Arms of *Justinian* Emperour of *Constantinople*.

F I N I S.

